231
[262] the "great man" (feudal lord) and to warriors at rural, traditional feasts.

The cattle is not fat, since there is no intensive feeding. Even bulls are so patient that children can herd them, and cows are accustomed to walking home unescorted even through urban streets -- including Addis Ababa. With its broad forehead, long narrow skull, well-developed horns, the Abyssinian cattle still bears some resemblance to Primigenius, the cattle of Egypt and Nubia, and probably of Ethiopia prior to 500 B.C.[62]

● 232 Cattle is slaughtered for meat only in case of a barren cow and when the ox becomes too old to pull the plow. The male ancestry of a calf is given little attention, because it is not always possible, under the relaxed manner of breeding, to identify the paternal animal. Bulls are gelded by having their testicles crushed between rocks, and an ox so treated is called "wärām" or "mäsina". Since the testicles are not cut, this primitive operation is not infrequently unsuccessful, and such a bull is then referred to as "amälät" and is troubled no further since it is believed that he is so virile that his virility cannot be taken from him without killing him. Bulls are gelded not to prevent them from begetting offspring, but to prevent them from "dissipating their energies" in sexual activity when it is needed for plowing. A rare secondary reason would be to fatten them for sale in preperation for slaughter.

Fully grown steers are fattened by feeding them chäw bälē, a mineral salt, for two years, or, where mineral

62. Ibid.

232 springs ("ambo") exist, by taking them to water there("Hora"). This is done also to increase the milk supply of cows. "Rejuvenators" ("zəbäzayähu) consisting of large pieces of mineral salt are fed to them for this purpose, also. Whenever possible, cows are taken to spots where the light rains have sprouted fresh grass ("chälo"). If the unreliable light rains fail to appear, the cattle is taken to "chäqäçhi", lit. muddy places, i.e. brooks and river beds that retain some moisture and grass, when meadows are yellow, dry, and even crabgrass is wooden and nearly useless.

234 A cow will not let herself be milked, despite the remarkable patience of this cattle, unless a calf stands close or in front of her. But the Amhara find it sufficient, when no calf is available, to prop up a stuffed calfskin in front of the cow. The milking period lasts from 2 - 8 months. While at the climax the cow can be milked several times a day, this is reduced to only once a day toward the end. The calf takes most of the mother's milk during the first month. Then milking is begun gradually, first 1/4 udder, until, at the end of the 3rd month, the entire udder. Italian estimates of the milk production during the entire lactation period vary from 200 to 450 kilos, the average being 300 kilos.[63]

232 A calf weighing 15-25 kilos at birth reaches no more than 80-100 kilos at the end of the year. Both male ("bäre") and female ("lam") cattle reach their full height at seven years, and are almost never slaughtered before then. Despite the slow growth and the small milk supply,

63. Ibid.

232 these cattle are resistant to diseases that killed off European cattle brought to Ethiopia by Point IV. This immunity includes poisonous grasses as well as ticks. They are resistant to changes in temperature between day and night, thrive on natural fodder of little nutritive quality, and even old cows continue to have calves for a considerable period.

233 Several factors characterize the Amhara attitude as agricultural rather than pastoral, in addition to the emphasis on the hump and the geldin-for-strength instead of for breeding. Herding is not considered a suitable occupation for a grown Amhara adult; there is no cowboy pattern at all, and cattle herding is usually assigned to boys under 12 years of age while sheep-and-goatherding is often assigned to a dimwitted simpleton. The corral is not of strong stakes, but of light, loose thornbushes.

231 556 On the other hand, cattle, especially cows, play an important role in social organization and other human relations among the Amhara. The terms for cattle and for wealth are synonymous. In marriage agreements, the kinfolk on both the bride's and the groom's side promise to contribute an equal number of cows. This means that the child of a poor farmer cannot hope to marry the offspring of a wealthy farmer, under the usual circumstances, unless the rich partner restricts his contribution to what the poor can afford, or unless the poorer manages to borrow enough cattle from a wider range of kinfolk.

To overcome boundaries of social stratification, cattle enables a peasant to present an "entrance gift"

233 folded" for export.

Sheep are raised primarily for meat. They do not figure in social organization except as minor gifts (including entrance gifts). They are small in stature, and so inexpensive that the sheepskin can often be sold for 1/3 the cost of the entire animal. The woolly skins are used as cloaks, bedcovers, etc. The sheep is not bred for wool, only for meat, especially for the fattail ("lat") which is as prized as in other Middle Eastern areas. The wool (yebäg t'ägur) is not very long, and is used to stuff pillows in urban areas. Wool weaving is a local specialty of remote districts, now dying out due to competition of modern, imported blankets, but formerly used to make the black, Arab-type "burnos". [286]

Goats as well as sheep are usually entrusted to an ex-slave or a simpleton, or very small children, when on pasture. Domestic goats ("feyäl") are raised because of the cheapness of their meat, and the skin which is tanned by the Faqi, and made into parchment for church literature, etc. To fatten rams, their testicles are crushed between rocks, and the resulting animal is called "qetqet". [281] [232]

231 Horses are small, wiry and very enduring. They are the animal of the young aristocrats in warfare, in games showing prowess. Mules, small, wiry, and intelligent, cost at least twice as much as horses. They are preferred by travellers and older persons, and are used as the animal of honor ridden by the veiled bride when she is taken to her bridegroom's hamlet. If they can at all afford it, a Senaar mule is preferred, and for the bridal

231 party preferably a white one. Senaar mules are as big as Ethiopian horses, being the offspring of a large Arabian male donkey and an Ethiopian mare (horse). A good Senaar mule may cost twice the price of an Ethiopian mule, especially when actually imported from the Senaar (Sudan). Its strong but ambling gait ("täkolkoloch" or"säggära") is due to the work of the expert trainer. A donkey is the cheapest of all animals of transportation, very small in stature, and never ridden except in jest by very small children. All these Ethiopian animals are surefooted on steep hills, the Ethiopian mule most of all.

● 232 Many Livestock diseases are endemic. The more common are:

Mouth disease of cattle - "maz" (Shoa "qefd"), transferred by licking. Treatment is often the same as that traditionally given humans for syphilis, including bathing in hot springs.

Wasting disease - "gordäbeta", or "gorba" for short, which affects cattle and other horned animals; believed caused by evil eye (buda).

Broken-windedness of horses - "nedfat" (lit. pricked), believed caused by evil spirit who has"pricked the animal" and is drinking its strength.

Dizzy spinning on one spot - "azwarit", believed caused by demon.

If the disease is of physical origin, a "wogäsha" surgeon-herbologist may be called in. Sores on the backs of mules and other livestock are cauterized with a "guba", a hot iron rod about two feet long, with a bent tip. If

232 the sickness is believed of magic origin, a däbtära may be called, or a zar doctor consulted. One often sees large nicks cut out of the ears of livestock, especially cows, where pieces have been excised and fed to the spirits on the principle of "pars pro toto".

235 Chickens ("doro") are small, look undernourished, and lay very small eggs. Little clay henhouses are built for them. They are cooked in "doro wot" (chicken curry--Abyssinian style) in a golden reddish sauce, but do not occupy a highly honored spot in the diet, and at feasts are prepared merely to add variety to the menu. Until recently eggswere not sold but given away. Even now they are very cheap. No attempt is made to breed fowl.

231 Beekeeping is one of the few ways the farmer has to obtain some ready cash income. As soon as the rainy season is over, and fragrant wildflowers carpet the landscape, the time for swarming has arrived. The farmer prepares a hollow cylindrical reed basket (called"qäfo"), with one end narrower. This he places in the fork of a tree. Sometimes it is made from the bark of the "elol" or "lol" tree. It has an exit, "fenchu". Sometimes the farmer will capture the queen bee ("awura neb", lit. vulture bee) in a little box and place her inside the basket, so that the worker bees, called "virgin bees" ("dengel neb") because they do not lay eggs, will swarm after her. He is not afraid of stings which are small, cause only a little pimple and heal rapidly. Next to the reed basket he often builds a smaller hive of sticks and mud ("gushgusha"), so that the bees will not have far to go when they decide to break up the colony

412 ly by the ladies. An awl ("wäsfe") is used in basket-making and umbrella-weaving. A small chisel ("mesar") may be a more recent introduction, but, like the awl and larger items, is nonetheless made by the (Falasha) smith. [232] Burning irons for burning out sores on the backs of mules and donkeys are also made by the ironsmith.

326 The ironsmith, usually Falasha in ethnic identification, does not usually do silversmithing. This is done in urban areas or big markets usually by Muslim silversmiths. The silver is smithed from Maria Theresa thalers, and the smith may keep as much as 2/3 of the "raw material" for himself. As in the case of most other marketable tools and utensils, the product of the silversmith is made on order only, though increasingly there are traders with chests full of silver filigree earspoons, crosses, rings, etc., ready for sale to officials, travellers, and others with ready cash. In the past, silversmiths using imported coins, and goldsmiths using Ethiopian mined gold nuggets, were to found primarily attached to the tent city of the king at his capital. Casting is done on the principle of cire perdue, a form of wax in clay.

411 Weapons were made also in connection with the feudal military organization, which required the craftsman to follow wherever the armed bands of the warlords went in raids or new settlements, serving as a kind or ordinance, and always on call. Rifles in Abyssinia date back over 300 years, handed down as family property, the stocks replaced time and again with tough, white wood, "wanza" (Cordia abyssinica). Each soldier carried gunpowder in